

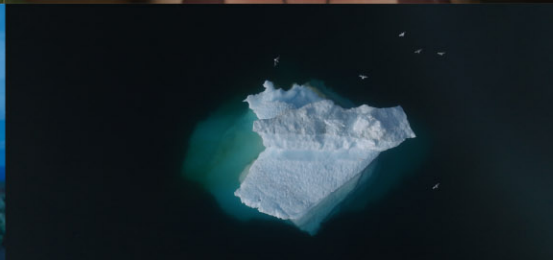
A Companion for Deep Listening,
Reflective Practice, and Relational Healing



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Welcome. This is not a workbook to get through. It is a companion to walk with. Just as *The Eternal Song & 12-Film Collection* are not merely films, but an opening—a weaving of stories, grief, and ancestral wisdom—this companion invites you into a relational field of learning, unlearning, and remembering.

We ask: Which rhythms are you bringing into this space? Which stories live in your bones? Which songs are waiting to be heard again?

Before you continue, take a moment to:

- * Breathe
- * Acknowledge the land you are on and the peoples who have tended this land for generations
- * Offer gratitude to the more-than-human beings who share this place with you

Perhaps you're about to take in the film solo, or with kindreds, or you're coordinating a screening in community. However you are gathering, we hope the questions and insights in this booklet can support you to engage with this film as ceremony.

Please watch this welcome message by our dear friend and author, Yemi Penn:



The Eternal Song & 12-Film Collection are a cinematic journey into ancestral memory, grief, and sacred resilience. It opens a portal to listen to Indigenous wisdom, not as content to consume, but as living medicine to metabolize.

These stories remind us how modern mindsets have severed our connections to Earth, each other, and Spirit, while feeding us hollow promises of salvation, unlimited economic growth, and individual happiness.

Yet, beneath this amnesia is a song that those of us who have been disconnected from our ancestral lands and lineages have fallen out of rhythm with, but have not completely forgotten.

We open a portal to listen to Indigenous wisdom, not as content to consume, but as living medicine to metabolize.

We are called to witness intergenerational trauma, rediscover our kinship with Earth and awaken to a collective remembering—one that calls us back to belonging.

Let the film peel back the layers. Allow yourself to grieve. Let these stories move you and shape your action toward repair.

“Our nervous system is not limited to our bodies. The nervous system is forests and rivers and mountains, and the past, and what is yet to come.”

—Baya Akomolafe, Yoruba Philosopher & Author



Let's take a moment to unpack one of the central themes woven throughout the film: trauma healing. Rather than mastering a definition, let us feel into how these patterns may arise within our own families and cultures, toward grounding what we will witness in the film with our lived experience.

TRAUMA

Trauma is more than an event. It's a rupture in our sense of connection.



- ☀️ **Individual trauma** is the residue of any deeply distressing life experience that overwhelms our coping capacities, and lives in our bodies
- ☀️ **Intergenerational trauma** is the unhealed residue that passes through generations often silently, often biologically, through behaviors, grief, and memory
- ☀️ **Historical trauma** is intergenerational trauma experienced by a cultural group who are systemically oppressed
- ☀️ **Collective trauma** is the result of an event or series of events that shatter the experience of safety for a group of people, and can be carried by communities, cultures, or whole societies across generations

"Trauma is a response to anything that's overwhelming that happens too much, too fast, too soon, or too long, coupled with a lack of protection or support."

—Resmaa Menakem, Trauma Specialist & Author



“From the perspective of a medicine person, healing starts with dealing with the imbalances. Because from that perspective, we deal with the root cause. Instead of chasing the symptoms.”

—Iya Afo, Historical Trauma Specialist



TRAUMA HEALING

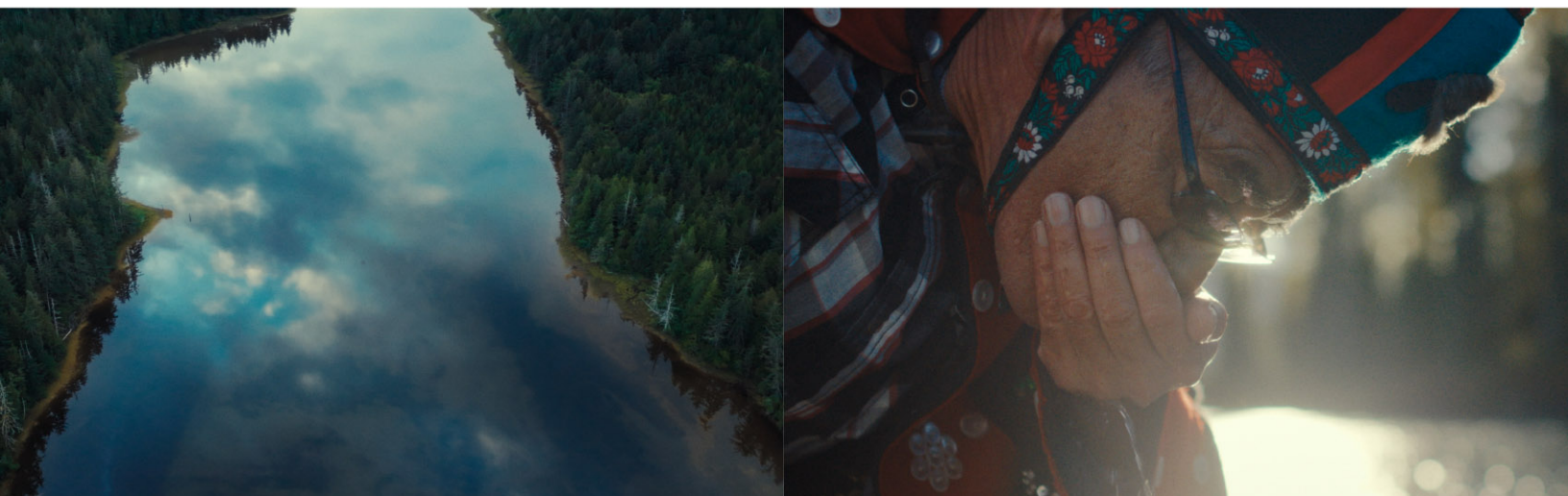
While Western modalities often view trauma as an individual problem, Indigenous frameworks understand it as a spiritual disturbance, one that must be tended to collectively and in relationship to the land.

From an Indigenous and traditional perspective, trauma healing extends far beyond psychological health to include spiritual, physical, emotional, and communal well-being. Personal wounds taken together become communal ruptures, experienced as harm to the whole ecosystem of relationship to land, lineage, and spirit. These connections can be restored through ceremony, intergenerational story sharing, land-based practices, and presence.

Healing is not found in isolation – it asks us to reconnect with our benevolent ancestors, our communities, and with the generations to come. Healing is a non-linear practice without outcome or final destination.

“When we had our ceremonies, the wiping the tears ceremony... That was our therapy. It was spiritual therapy with the Earth.”

—Tiokasin Ghosthorse, Cheyenne River Lakota Nation



THE TRAUMA OF COLONIZATION

In this film series, we witness how indigenous communities are healing from colonization. Colonization is not just a historical event it – is an ongoing system of territorial, economic, and psychological domination that continues to shape global structures and relationships today. It leaves deep scars not only on individuals but on entire communities through wounds from events like genocide, slavery, and displacement.

Some of us carry wounds as survivors of colonial oppression, others as descendants of colonizers, and some of us have lineages of both oppressor and oppressed, still others of us are cut off from knowledge of our lineage. These wounds don't end with one generation; they ripple forward as intergenerational trauma, passed down through families via behaviors, stories, and even biology.

Healing requires acknowledging these layered impacts and engaging in collective processes of remembrance, repair, and reconnection. Additionally, it asks us to actively dismantle systems of colonization at play in the present moment. This includes addressing the realities of repression, discrimination, invisibilization, disenfranchisement, and the denigration of Indigenous cultures, languages, and spiritual ways of knowing.

Notice where there may be ongoing impacts of colonization in your relationships, community, land and society.

“Modernity has put us in a trance of separation. Ceremony helps me remember how to be part of the whole again.”

—Pat McCabe, Diné Ceremonial Leader & Activist



Let the film be a ritual—an encounter with truth, beauty, grief, and resilience.

BEFORE WATCHING:

- ✧ Create sacred space — silence phones, light a candle, take a breath, dim the lights
- ✧ Set an intention to witness these stories, and the pain and resilience, with reverence and respect, rather than judgement or analysis
- ✧ Reflect on your relationship to your own ancestors, to the land where you live, and to colonization
- ✧ If viewing in community, encourage pair sharing on these reflections. You may wish to invite people to dedicate their viewing by speaking aloud the name of a beloved ancestor

WHILE WATCHING:

- ✧ Be present, witness with your whole being
- ✧ Let your body feel what your mind may not yet understand, welcome emotions and tears
- ✧ If you need to, allow yourself to step away and return to your breath

AFTER WATCHING:

- ✧ Sit for a moment in silence, let the film linger in your body, in the room
- ✧ Place your hands on your heart or on the Earth, breathe in, exhale
- ✧ Reflect on what arises in conversation or by writing, using the questions on the next page, and letting insights unfold slowly, like seeds under soil
- ✧ Close the space by extinguishing the candle, sharing a song, breaking bread, and thanking those present



Integration is not about closure—it is about relationship. Let these reflections help you digest what the film stirred, and guide your next steps. Let this be a space of humility, not expertise. Curiosity over judgement. Compassion, care, and active listening.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

✧ Honoring Our Lineages

- › What do you know about your ancestral lineage and their relationships to land and loss?
- › What stirs curiosity about your lineages' histories, migrations, rituals, songs, ruptures, gifts?
- › What are the wounds you carry that you hope might end with you?
- › What biases and assumptions did you inherit with your cultural background?

✧ Responding to the Film

- › Reflect on the feelings the film evoked in you.
- › What was most moving or surprising?
- › Where did you feel uncomfortable or want to turn away?
- › What insight(s) will you carry with you?



✧ Being with the Land

- › What is your relationship to the land where you live now, and the indigenous peoples of that place?
- › What practices help you cultivate a reciprocal relationship with land and the more-than-human world?

✧ Tending Right Relationship

- › Where have you seen meaningful efforts toward healing from colonization in your relationships, community, land, or country?
- › What steps can you personally take to amplify Indigenous and marginalized voices, without appropriating them?
- › How might we move from witnessing or consuming content to walking alongside in accompaniment toward collective healing and liberation?
- › Using this film as an opening, what is one action you might engage in after viewing? Consider closing your conversation by inviting participants to each share one commitment to action

Colonization is not just something of the past that we are healing from. It is actively continuing today. We each have a role to play in shifting out of the curse, and imagining ourselves into new, interwoven, life-affirming ways of being. Learning how to act in accompaniment, how to co-resist systemic racism and colonial structures, is life-long work.

Hearing these stories comes with a responsibility.
How might you carry forward what this film ignited in you?



HERE ARE SOME INVITATIONS

- ☀️ Learn whose ancestral lands you are living on — one resource: native-land.ca
- ☀️ Support local Indigenous leadership and initiatives financially, relationally, politically
- ☀️ Pay indigenous land tax where possible
- ☀️ Protect sacred sites, and listen for the stories the land around you still carries
- ☀️ Make space to mourn what's been lost, create or join a grief circle
- ☀️ Engage in your own lineage healing, seek out teachers and healing practitioners to support your journey, reclaim ceremony, make offerings, sing
- ☀️ Share this film with your community, congregation, school by hosting a screening — see theeternalsong.org/screenings
- ☀️ Find more ways to continue learning and taking action at theeternalsong.org/resources

ONE SMALL STEP TODAY

What is one action, commitment, or shift you feel called to make after witnessing these stories?
Write it down. Begin here.



The Eternal Song & 12-Film Series was created in close relationship with Indigenous communities — both in front of and behind the camera. We are deeply grateful for the trust extended across divides shaped by centuries of colonization, and we remain committed to honoring cultural protocols.

These films are part of a broader effort to restore right relationship. At least 50% of the proceeds received after covering costs are directed to Indigenous-initiated and Indigenous-led initiatives in the communities featured in the films. These are not acts of charity, but pathways of reparation, restoration, and long-term solidarity.

We invite you to go beyond viewing and learn about the specific communities, initiatives, and dreams these films support. Explore how the harvest of these films is being shared, and how you, too, can participate in this circle of giving: theeternalsong.org/reciprocity

“To us, the land is not something different from us. The land is me.
The land is us. And we are the land.”

—Samwel Leiyan Nangiria, Maasai Activist



The Eternal Song has been a learning journey toward practicing solidarity and embodying principles of cultural humility throughout the filmmaking, relationship building, and activism that comes after each film's release. Here are some of the ways we strive to walk humbly, and invite you to join us in doing the same.

SELF-REFLECTION

- ☀ Approach other cultures with genuine curiosity rather than assumptions
- ☀ Examine your own cultural perspective, biases, and assumptions
- ☀ Read books, watch films, and engage with art created by Indigenous people

RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT

- ☀ Enter conversations with a commitment to deep listening
- ☀ Avoid positioning yourself as an expert on someone else's culture
- ☀ Accept correction gracefully when you misunderstand
- ☀ Assume good intent and acknowledge harmful impact
- ☀ Follow the leadership of Indigenous and frontline communities
- ☀ Counter extractive modern cultural norms, and honor Indigenous teachers by showing up well-prepared and offering compensation
- ☀ Be aware of historical and current power imbalances, and your social positioning, in cross-cultural interactions



INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

- ☼ Use your platform to uplift the voices of those silenced by oppression
- ☼ Seek to not only treat symptoms, but challenge systems that perpetuate cultural dominance, dehumanization, and exploitation
- ☼ Hold sacred the dignity, culture and history of Indigenous communities by supporting their agency and reclamation of identity
- ☼ Stand alongside those impacted by colonialism, injustice, and war
- ☼ Advocate for Indigenous representation in decision-making processes
- ☼ Question "standard" procedures that may reflect cultural bias
- ☼ Support land return and repatriation, and Indigenous-led stewardship
- ☼ Promote not only healing, but freedom and justice in all aspects of the work

“Liberation and mental health are intertwined, and we must be the healers who stand for both... Let us unite, as healers and defenders of human rights, to bring about a world where mental health is synonymous with justice and liberation.”

—Dr. Samah Jabr, psychologist and author,
whose oath inspired the institutional practices above



The Eternal Song is the first film of a 12 film series illuminating indigenous wisdom, land-based resilience, and the work of collective healing. Stay with us on this journey. Let each story deepen your commitment to relational healing. (For more info on the series go to: <https://theeternalsong.org/the-films/>)

Bring these films to your community: theeternalsong.org/screenings

With deep gratitude to all our ancestors whose dreams, resilience, and prayers carry us forward. And to the lands that hosted this project, whose soil, waters, winds, and more-than-human kin held us as quiet witnesses and generous teachers along the way.



CLOSING BLESSING

May we walk slowly.

May we listen deeply.

May we remember the song that never stopped singing through us.

May our lives root into its rhythm with tenderness and courage.

May the Eternal Song offer medicine for our fractured times to help us
reimagine our place in the sacred web of life.

May we live in balance and harmony with the more-than-human world.

May we act with integrity for the wellbeing of future generations.